



Lawrence Public Schools

Superintendent Statement

Immigrants and Refugee Students

January 30, 2026

Hello Lawrence Public Schools Community,

I am reaching out today with an important message. In light of emergent concerns, this is a critical time to refresh and clarify our work together regarding immigrant and refugee students in the Lawrence Public Schools.

In the Lawrence Public Schools, we remain deeply committed to supporting ALL our students and their families, regardless of national origin, religion, or immigration status; we stand in strong support of our students and their families.

We understand that many of our children and families are experiencing concern as a result of recent national developments, and we will continue to reassure all within our community of our ongoing engagement and support. As is true every day, we all remain ready to support our children and families who are experiencing concerns.

It is important to note, despite announcements, that the law has not changed. The [Kansas State Department of Education statement](#) clarifies, “**...We remind school personnel that their ultimate responsibility is the education and protection of all students. All students have a constitutionally protected right to receive an education.**”

We will continue to work every day to ensure that ALL children are welcomed, embraced, and valued as important members of our USD 497 learning community in each of our classrooms and schools; this fundamental core value and practice remains firm today.

Our team will continue to abide by all state and federal laws and board policies in ensuring student safety and protecting student information. Further, in keeping with the law, we will not share any student data without a warrant, subpoena, or other lawfully issued court order. Our team will continue to follow the law and abide by board-approved policies regarding

investigations and/or arrests on school grounds.

In the Lawrence Public Schools, we view diversity as our strength, and we respect and value each of our students and their families. We are honored to work and live in a diverse, international school environment, and we value this as a gift that enriches and strengthens our community.

Specifically, as initial guidance, (more detail will follow in subsequent updates, as needed), we are sharing the following:

- In keeping with federal law, we will continue in our commitment and practice to ensure that a child's immigration status will have no impact whatsoever on their education in Lawrence Public Schools.
- Children have a constitutional right to equal access to education regardless of their immigration status or the status of their parents.
- The fundamental right to access public education is constitutionally protected.
- In Lawrence Public Schools, we will not ask about a child's immigration status at school. Public school districts have a legal obligation to enroll students regardless of their immigration status and without discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.
- It continues to be the policy of the Lawrence Public Schools not to allow any individual or organization to enter a school site if the educational setting would be disrupted by that visit.
- Any request by the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Office (ICE), state or local law enforcement agencies acting on behalf of ICE, or agents or officers for any federal, state, or local agency attempting to enforce federal immigration laws to visit a school site should be presented to the Superintendent's Office for review as to whether access to the site is permitted by law, a signed judicial warrant is required, or any other legal considerations apply; this review should be made expeditiously, but before any immigration law enforcement agent or officer appears at a school site.
- Should ICE or other immigration law enforcement agents request any student information, the request should be referred to the Superintendent's Office to ensure compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student constitutional privacy, standards for a judicial warrant, and any other limitation on disclosure; this review should be conducted expeditiously, but before any information is disclosed.

In addition, we will continue to partner and coordinate with our many excellent Lawrence community organizations and resources to connect additional support for our families beyond

the school setting.

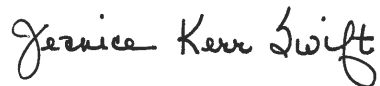
We have included links to the following resources for further reading, in case they are helpful:

- [NEA: How Educators Can Support Immigrant and Migrant Students](#)
- [ACLU: FAQ For Educators on Immigrant Students in Public Schools](#)
- [Ed.gov: Educational Resources for Immigrants, Refugees, Asylees and other New Americans](#)

We will follow the law and board policy, and we are committed to serving as a model for all our students who are our greatest responsibility and our best hope. Our children are valued in our classrooms for who they are, and the gifts they bring. We remain committed that all our children will continue to experience the safe haven of a warm, welcoming, and supportive classroom environment on each and every day at school.

I am so very proud of our educators, and our Lawrence community and am grateful for our partnership together to serve all students: every student, every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanice Kerr Swift". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeanice Kerr Swift
Superintendent of Schools
Lawrence Public Schools